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What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
sending an upgrade package over a computer network;
receiving the upgrade package in a network device; and
automatically upgrading internal software of a
5 peripheral device installed in the network device using the
upgrade package.
2. The method of claim 1 including recognizing the
10 received package as an upgrade package based on information
contained therein.
3. The method of claim 1 including recognizing the
received package based on a filename extension associated
15 with the package.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein automatically upgrading
the internal software includes:
opening a communications channel to the peripheral
20 device; and
updating the peripheral device with contents of the
upgrade package.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein upgrading the peripheral
25 device includes:
setting the peripheral device to an upgrade mode;

SEARCHED **E6047526.0**
INDEXED
FILED
OCT 20 2009

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~~parsing contents of the upgrade package into a format suitable for the peripheral device; and transferring the parsed contents to the peripheral device.~~

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6. The method of claim 5 wherein setting the peripheral device to an upgrade mode includes issuing a command to the peripheral device.

10 7. The method of ~~claim 5~~ wherein setting the peripheral to an upgrade mode includes erasing contents of memory in the peripheral device.

15 8. The method of claim 1 including sending a message indicating success or failure of the upgrade to a source of the upgrade package.

9. A system comprising:
a computer network;
20 a network device coupled to the network; and
a peripheral device installed within the network device;

wherein the network device comprises a processor configured to receive an upgrade package over the network
25 and automatically upgrade the peripheral device using the upgrade package.

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10. The system of claim 9 wherein the processor is configured to upgrade the peripheral device's internal software with the package.

5 11. The system of claim 9 wherein the network device is configured to recognize the received package as an upgrade package based on information contained in the package.

10 12. The system of claim 9 wherein the network device is configured to recognize the received package as an upgrade package based on a filename extension associated with the package.

15 13. The system of claim 9 wherein the processor is configured to:
open a communications channel to the peripheral device;
and
upgrade the peripheral device with contents of the upgrade package.

20 14. The system of claim 13 wherein the processor is configured to:

set the peripheral device to an upgrade mode;
parse contents of the upgrade package into a format suitable for the peripheral device; and
transfer the parsed contents to the peripheral device.

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15. ~~The system of claim 14 wherein the processor is configured to set the peripheral device to the upgrade mode by issuing a command to the peripheral device.~~

5 16. ~~The system of claim 14 wherein the peripheral device includes memory with a location for storing the contents of the upgrade packages, and wherein the processor is configured to cause contents of the memory location to be erased prior to the transfer of the parsed contents.~~

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17. ~~The system of claim 9 wherein the processor is configured to send a message indicating success or failure of the upgrade to a source of the upgrade package.~~

15 18. An article comprising a computer-readable medium that stores computer-executable instructions for causing a computer system to:

recognize a received package as an upgrade package intended for a peripheral device installed in a network
20 device; and

automatically upgrade internal software in the peripheral device using the upgrade package.

19. The article of claim 18 including instructions for
25 causing the computer system to recognize the received package as an upgrade package based on information contained in the package.

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20. The article of claim 18 including instructions for causing the computer system to:
- open a communications channel to the peripheral device;
- 5 and
- upgrade the peripheral device with contents of the upgrade package.
21. The article of claim 20 including instructions for causing the computer system to:
- set the peripheral device to an upgrade mode;
- parse contents of the upgrade package into a format suitable for the peripheral device; and
- transfer the parsed contents to the peripheral device.
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22. The article of claim 21 including instructions for causing the computer system to issue a command to the peripheral device in order to set the peripheral device to the upgrade mode.
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23. The article of claim 21 including instructions for causing the computer system to ~~erase a location in the memory of the peripheral device and subsequently transfer the parsed contents to the memory location.~~
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24. The article of claim 18 including instructions for causing the computer system to send a message indicating success or failure of the upgrade.
- 5 25. An apparatus comprising:
a port for coupling the apparatus to a network;
a peripheral device installed in the apparatus; and
a processor;
wherein the processor is configured to receive an
10 upgrade package through the port and automatically upgrade internal software of the peripheral device using the upgrade package.
- 15 26. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the processor is configured to recognize the received package as an upgrade package based on information contained therein.
- 20 27. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the processor is configured to recognize the received package based on a filename extension associated with the package.
- 25 28. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the processor is configured to:
set the peripheral device to an upgrade mode;
parse contents of the upgrade package into a format suitable for the peripheral device; and
transfer the parsed contents to the peripheral device.

29. — The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the processor is configured to issue a command to cause the peripheral device to enter the upgrade mode.

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30. The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the processor is configured to erase contents of a location in memory in the peripheral device in order to set the peripheral device to the upgrade mode.

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